

Ilse persevered through her cancer treatment. She worked her way through high school with an impressive list of extracurriculars and went on to earn a scholarship that eventually got her to the front steps of her dream school, the University of Washington.

When I met Ilse in 2013, she told me that after 15 years of waiting for her petition to obtain a visa, she lost the opportunity to obtain legal residency when she turned 21 years old. But thanks to the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, or DACA, she had a second chance. She said she doesn't know where she would be now without that second chance. She told me that DACA opened doors that were previously closed to her. And thanks to the increased certainty DACA brought and the amazing work ethic she has, Ilse was able to find jobs that helped pave her way through school.

Today she is able to continue to pursue her dream of helping others as a nurse and building a life in Washington State, her home.

I am pleased to report that Ilse has now been cancer free for over 14 years. So while I rise to talk about Ilse, I also wish to celebrate DACA.

Three years ago this week, Americans celebrated a historic step forward in protecting young, undocumented immigrants known as DREAMers, people such as Ilse. When DACA was enacted, the national dialogue on immigration policy forever changed. The administration announced that America is not a place that will deport someone who plays by the rules but through no fault of their own is an undocumented immigrant, someone who has known no other home than the United States, someone who is an American in all but name. This was a major step toward changing the lives of so many immigrant families.

During the past 3 years, more than 600,000 young immigrants have benefited from deferred action. In my home State of Washington, almost 15,000 DREAMers have been able to receive the stability and peace of mind that DACA brought.

Too often in this debate, it is difficult for some people to understand that millions of undocumented families in our country are already an important part of our community. Immigrants—documented or not—work hard. They send their children to schools throughout this country. They pay their taxes, and they help weave the fabric of our society. In all but name, they are Americans, and America would not be the same without them.

Despite the steps this administration has taken, only legislation from Congress can solve the underlying problem of a very broken immigration system.

So I am here today to say I stand ready to work with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to achieve that. Until Congress truly passes comprehensive immigration reform, I am going to continue working each day to help the

families and businesses—people such as Ilse—that are trapped by a broken system.

We must never forget the past and the fact that our Nation has long offered generations of immigrants a chance to achieve their dreams. Ilse is no different.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I wish to speak today about the National Defense Authorization Act, which was just passed on the floor after almost 3 weeks of debate on the Senate floor. Today, a very strong bipartisan majority passed this legislation. It is a very important bill.

TRAGEDY IN CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I wish to start by offering prayers and thoughts—I think of every Member of the Senate—to the families of those who were killed in last night's horrific, horrific shooting in South Carolina. No words can undo the incredible pain that they are going through, but I think knowing that Members of this body and the entire Congress are thinking and praying for these families is something that I just wish to state on the Senate floor before I begin to talk about this very important bill.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, as I mentioned, we passed the NDAA this afternoon after almost 3 weeks of debate, and I do wish to extend congratulations to the leadership, particularly to the chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, Senator MCCAIN, and the ranking member, Senator REED, who did such an outstanding job of working in a bipartisan fashion on this bill.

In many ways, this bill is about something that is so critical to American foreign policy and national security interests. What is that? It is credibility, the credibility of the United States. In many ways it is the coin of the realm in international security—how our friends, how our allies, and how our adversaries view American credibility, particularly in the realm of national security, international affairs, and foreign policy. They pay close attention to what we are doing on this floor, in the White House, and overseas—credibility.

Unfortunately, as many are aware, both at home and certainly overseas, we are rapidly losing credibility around the world. In fact, much of the world is puzzled. What is happening to American credibility in terms of foreign pol-

icy? We used to be the shining city on the hill, a beacon of strength, a beacon of freedom. Countries that wanted to do us harm didn't because they feared us. Our allies respected and trusted us. But, unfortunately, that is starting to change. It is changing. Red lines have been crossed with no consequences in places such as Syria, Ukraine, Russia, and in the Iranian negotiations. Many say American credibility has declined. Some say American credibility overseas is in shambles. Nations that once counted on us as friends, as allies, are having a harder time trusting the United States and in some ways are even suspicious of our motives and our policies.

So it is a critical, critical issue. How do we, as a country, regain credibility in the world. It is something that everybody in this body and everybody in the Federal Government should be focused on.

The NDAA bill that we just passed, the National Defense Authorization Act, is a way to start regaining credibility for our country, and we did that this afternoon. A very strong bipartisan majority in the Senate, 71 Senators, voted to pass this very important bill. It is one of the most important bills that we are going to vote on all year.

This is an important signal. U.S. foreign policy—our national security is strongest when we act in a bipartisan manner, as we did on the Senate floor today, and when the executive and legislative branches are working together on foreign policy and national security issues. That is what this bill does.

In many ways, this bill does pretty much exactly what the President has asked in a whole host of areas regarding the military. For example, it funds the Department of Defense at the levels requested by the President. And again I congratulate Chairman MCCAIN and Ranking Member REED for many of the key programs, many of the key reforms, and such a powerful bill that got through this body.

This bill also strongly endorses one of the President's signature foreign policy issues—the rebalance of our military focus to the Asia Pacific. There are many provisions in the NDAA that support this rebalanced strategy. Most Members—Republicans and Democrats—of this body are supportive of the President's rebalance strategy.

There is even a directive in the bill from the Congress to the Department of Defense and our military leaders that states: "In order to properly implement the U.S. rebalance policy, United States forces under operational control of the U.S. Pacific Command should be increased"—increased, not decreased. That is strong language. That is supporting the President's rebalance. The Department of Defense needs to heed this language from Congress, and of course we will be keeping a close eye on whether they do.